

**Founded in 1988, Essential Foods, with 28 employees, has become the Northwest's leading producer of fresh, vegetarian, burrito-style sandwiches. Delivered to over 250 food outlets in Washington and Oregon, and two major airlines, Essential's Burritos feature 13 international flavors and rely on organic ingredients.**



**Seattle Post-Intelligencer**  
THE VOICE OF THE NORTHWEST SINCE 1861  
Friday morning • July 20, 1991

**Flying burritos**  
Essential Foods takes off  
B0000541

**BUSINESS**

Millions of Essential's Portland-based package vegetable burritos land weekly, serving 10,000 burrito-lovers a day.

**Essential's Earth-friendly burritos taking to the air**

**By TRACY S. LARSEN**  
In Seattle

As more people seek to eat healthily, the growing number of vegetarians has created a market for high-quality products at competitive prices. One such product is Essential Foods' burritos.

But Seattle-based Essential Foods is doing it differently. The company is selling its burritos, which are made with organic ingredients, to airlines.

After serving to people the world over, a burrito is now being served to pilots.

The new products manager for Transair

Alaska and Continental have been serving the burrito to passengers requesting low-fat, low-sodium, vegetarian or vegan in-flight meals.

Essential Foods is going to work with the United States Postal Service and the U.S. Navy to make sure the burrito is a healthy choice for a wide range of people. The burrito is made with organic ingredients, including beans, corn, tomatoes and onions. It is also gluten-free, which makes it a healthy choice for people with gluten intolerance. The burrito is also low in fat and sodium, making it a healthy choice for people with high blood pressure.

For more information, contact Essential Foods at 503-255-1111.

By TRACY S. LARSEN

# **Climate Wise Action Plan**

## **FACILITY**

- installed efficient T8 fluorescent lighting and low flow toilets.
- implemented cardboard re-use, recycling, and compost program.
- create products focusing on organic ingredients and earth friendly packages.

## **DELIVERY TRUCKS AND REFRIGERATION**

- bypassed the need for heavy duty refrigerated vans by switching to small pick- up trucks with canopies. Inside each truck is a series of insulated boxes capped with frozen lids.
- our delivery system is lightweight, low maintenance, uses no Freon, and consumes half the gasoline necessary to operate refrigerated van.

# **Climate Wise Action Plan**

## **DISTRIBUTION**

- piggybacking products with deliveries on existing routes and back-hauling product on empty trucks has also proven to be an inexpensive, environmentally-sound way to limit fuel impact.

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## **LOCAL BUYING**

- purchasing from local sources eliminates the need to import materials.
- rather than purchasing organic tortillas shipped from California, we worked with a local manufacturer to create an organic tortilla.
- buying locally means fresher ingredients, means no shipping fees, and eliminates one freezer truck and its emissions from the freeways of California, Oregon and Washington.

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**“Frigi-top®” after a night in the freezer. Foam insulation upper, blue gel centers, metal plate bottoms. Stays frozen for an 8-9 hour shift and keeps product at 40 degrees or below.**

**Insulated box with “Frigi-top®”. Three boxes fit in canopied Toyota truck. Each box will accommodate 350-450 burritos making this system efficient, light weight, low maintenance, and economical.**

**“Frigi-tops®” are a registered trademark of  
Cornish Containers Inc., Maumee, Ohio  
1-800-537-0940**



## **Essential Foods' Fleet:**

### **Gas, Emissions and Cost Reductions**

#### **1998 Fuel Saved or Displaced by Action Plan Initiatives:**

- 6522 gallons motor fuel
- 104 metric tons Carbon Dioxide
  - \$8,805 in fuel costs
- saved \$8,000 on maintenance for refrigerator units
  - No Freon released into the atmosphere.

#### **Indirect savings:**

- upstream production of motor fuels
- employee downtime from van maintenance
- additional cost of buying vans vs. small trucks
- fewer accidents and related costs due to smaller vehicles.

# The Future

Essential Foods has been at the forefront of environmental business practices since its beginning. Our goal as a Climate Wise partner is to show other small businesses that growing with the environment in mind is not only good for the planet but can also mean saving money, resources, and the time it takes to retrofit when environmental standards change. We also believe it is important for us to continue to grow and learn from other companies that have developed innovative, earth-friendly practices that would benefit our company now and in the future.

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